

Values and Performance of King County Government

Comments from Citizen Councilors

"When King County is making choices between programs and services, I think those choices should be based on _____."

(T-49) ... some other choice.

First Priority

Both direct and indirect benefits will benefit the society at large the most

Cut spending

Cut spending

Fairness for rural landowners

Giving back our money; not spending us into debt

Local community planning

Manage funds available better.

Powers enumerated in the County charter and state & federal constitutions

Second Priority

Lower taxes

Necessity of each program of service

Serving US citizens & residents in King County

Third Priority

Carrying out statutory duties

Cut government footprint. Lower costs by working within real life/time budget like the rest of us must do.

Focus on core services that are not duplicated at other levels of government

If it is a service non-profits or community groups can handle and not government.

Medical tx for the poor

Offer leadership to bringing people together across rural/urban class, etc.

Reducing regulation & red tape

Not a Top Priority, abstain, object

Gov't should not be funding welfare or social services

Maintain county ordinances to ensure agricultural continuation in East King County

T-43, because it includes all people, not select groups

This is badly thought out - You suck!

Improve communication through PSA's

Regulate air traffic

Restore funding to sheriffs office

"As the county sets an agenda for the next five years I believe it should take into consideration _____."

(T-49) ... some other choice.

First Priority

Actions that solve problems instead of just responding to the symptoms

Balanced budget

Core functions of government, not "feel good" politics.

County performance

Culling government costs

Cutting dead weight in government. Remove unnecessary or overlapping layers that waste time and money.

Do sunset budgeting on all programs

Encourage & promote self-sufficiency in all economic classes so that individuals and families are not dependent on gov't in emergency situation

Focus on core services, live within the existing revenue stream.

Getting out of the way of business development, simply guiding growth in most useful way for County

Gov't should at all time be focused on reducing AND eliminating programs & services. The programs and services should be paid by the users!

Living within current revenue stream

Minimizing taxes to stimulate economic development

Public safety

Public safety

Quit spending so much. Balance your budget. Shrink bureaucracy.

Serving its mandated mission; services not provided by other gov't or business or NGO

Sheriff

Statutory duties

Sustainability

What we can afford without raising taxes or fees.

Second Priority

Adjusting to a long-term recycled revenue environment

Balance the budget based on no tax increase

Better use of tax money - no increased spending

Citizen Participation

Efficiency and productivity

Expand Countywide Community Forums to increase citizen participation and civic engagement

How wisely you spend the money you already have. You waste most of it.

Improve existing roads and highways

Lower taxes

Mass transit

Public Transportation

Sheriff

Social programs like health clinics, mental health programs, worker retraining and unemployment help job

Third Priority

Ensuring our citizens & businesses are not overburdened w/ taxes & more taxes. If you want to tax or charge fees -- look at a stricker . More severe penalties for breaking the law, not good tax paying folks.

Public safety

Public transportation

Reducing traffic congestion by upgrading chokepoints

Ridding the County of "islands" - promote annexation.

Road/transport

The government can have a role in facilitating /coordinating more privately initiated social safety net rather than primary provider.

The ways in which citizens can contribute to their community that would reduce tax burden but meet the needs.

Transportation

Transportation

Transportation

Transportation, bus, light rail

Not a Top Priority, abstain, object

Everything!!!

Gang reduction to improve public safety
Government restructuring for greater efficiency at all levels
Restore Sheriff's funding
Cut spending or services to lower burden on businesses so they can create jobs
Once again KC needs to respect the needs of rural KC
Only 2 acceptable responses given the choices

Over the next five years, I would like to see King County, as my regional government, focus on (T-67) ... some other priority.

First Priority

Improving roads
Living within existing revenue
Prioritize budget
Tax cuts/refunds
Weed out fat cat. High paid positions.

Second Priority

Going to in person and paper ballots
Reducing spending

Third Priority

Build more roads
Low taxes
Lower taxes
More sheriffs

Fourth Priority

Encourage effective and affordable private transportation system
Quality public school system
Smarter penal system

Fifth Priority

Trails & Park

Not a Top Priority, abstain, object

No specificity
Get out of growth management
This sucks!

Weed out lawyer scum like Seattle Laywer Michael T. Schein who prey on the most vulnerable members of society and biased and incompetent judges like former King County Superior Court Judge Richard A Jones who aid and assist lawyers like Schin in victimizing innocent, vulnerable and sick people in King County. Weed out incompetent and biased ex-parte guardianship court commissioners like Carlos Velteggi.

T-55 /T66 are just plain stupid

(T-94) Rather than having to make continued reductions, the one tax increase I would most be willing to support for CRIMINAL JUSTICE would be:

a Utility Tax increase

Income tax that replaces property & sales tax (progressive tax)

No tax increase

No tax increases

Some other tax increase

Alcohol, tobacco, gambling or other "sin taxes"

Allow corporate advertizing on documents & buildings

Continue reductions and do not increase tax rates.

Gas tax

Hotel, car rental, fish license fee

Income

Income

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax

Increase fines

State or KC income tax

There is more than one tax (circled 1, 2, 3 - Sales, property and utility taxes)

Utility tax increase in incorporated areas

Abstain, object

No tax increase

Find ways to make reductions

No more taxes

Us folks can't afortd mor taxes

Use resorative justice approaches to transform system

Why unincorporated areas?

(T-95) Rather than having to make continued reductions, the one tax increase I would most be willing to support for PUBLIC HEALTH would be:

Utility Tax increase

Also special levy

No tax increase

Fee for service when they can

Have enough - and no good mgmt so waste is very high - fix it

No tax increases

Some other tax increase

Border crossing tax on purchases in OR & BC or internet sales tax for purchases in WA

Carbon tax on industry/business

Continue reductions and do not increase tax rates.

Co-pays

Employer / direct

Income

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax that replaces property & sales tax (progressive tax)

Industry carbon emissions or graduated income

No new taxes. Allow corporate advertizing on documents & buildings

Partial pay

State Income Tax

State Income Tax

State or KC income tax

Tax county health care benefits

The wealthy

There is more than one tax (circled 1, 2, 3 - Sales, property and utility taxes)

Object, abstain

We can't afford it.

No tax increase

(T-96) Rather than having to make continued reductions, the one tax increase I would most be willing to support for HUMAN SERVICES would be:

No tax increase

Need better mgmt! Seen it from the inside!

No tax increases

Some other tax increase

Border crossing tax on purchases in OR & BC or internet sales tax for purchases in WA

Carbon tax on industry/business

Continue reductions and do not increase tax rates.

Cut salaries of KC employees like rest of us are doing

Income

Income

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax

Income tax that replaces property & sales tax (progressive tax)

Industry carbon emissions or graduated income

No new taxes. Allow corporate advertizing on documents & buildings

State Income Tax

State or KC income tax

There is more than one tax (circled 1, 2, 3 - Sales, property and utility taxes)

Abstain, object

We can't afford it.

No tax increase

(T-97) Rather than having to make continued reductions, the one tax increase I would most be willing to support for BUS SERVICE would be:

No tax increase

Fares

Increase fares (beyond the + \$.75) good user fee

No tax increases

Some other tax increase

\$1 a gallon gas tax
Border crossing tax on purchases in OR & BC or internet sales tax for purchases in WA
Carbon tax on industry/business
Charge fares to pay costs of service
Continue reductions and do not increase tax rates.
Gas tax
Gas tax
Gas tax
Gas tax
Gas tax increase
Gas tax: people drive smaller cars, not travel as much,etc.
Gasoline tax
Gasoline tax, highway tolls
Higher fares
Higher fares
Income
Income
Income tax
Income tax
Income tax
Income tax
Income tax
Income tax that replaces property & sales tax (progressive tax)
Increase commuter fare
Industry carbon emissions or graduated income
No new taxes. Allow corporate advertizing on documents & buildings
Riders pay more
Road tolls
RTID tax / employer tax
State Income Tax
State or KC income tax
There is more than one tax (circled 1, 2, 3 - Sales, property and utility taxes)
Vehicle tax based on miles driven and vehicle weight

Abstain, object

We can't afford it.
No tax increase

(P-1) What topic would you like to discuss in future *Countywide Community Forums*?

Abstain

Police services

A specific transportation proposal

520 bridge replacement & more road construction
520 or bus/lightrail integration
Bringing people together across race/class/rural-urban, etc.
Ferry service
Improve Metro transit service
Increase ridership to cover costs of bus service

Metro. Gas tax

Service equity based on taxes raised/ area.

Tax Reform in King County

How to better serve the local residents for which KC is the provider of local services

Tax reform & public safety are #1 on my priorities.

Some other topic

1) Education; 2) Personal property rights

Accountability & Transparency

Budget

clean up the pay-to-play, i.e. corruption

Education

Education / schools

Government reduction

Health and mental health

Healthcare

How county could spend less: lower employee salaries and benefits; make county employees pay & benefits compatible with private industry - Public servants should not earn more than private industry. Our bureaucrats

How to reduce the intrusion of county government on individual lives.

How to root out corruption in the King County legal and justice system with regard to guardianship.

Human services

Improved trails/lane for bike commuters

Intransigence of KC bureaucracy.

Land use/CAO

Maintaining health & human services to those in need and decriminalizing minor drug offenses in favor of treatment and community service

New Ideas

Security & legality of voting

Sustainable Communities

Tax reduction and cutting back county employees and services

Voting - time to go back to in person and paper ballots. There is so much fraud in our elections

Why county government doesn't want to look at union contracts to determine their impact on cost of living

(P-4) In general, do you think the 20-minute "Values and Performance of King County Government" video was fair and evenhanded? - This is correlated with how people responded on the "CCF is on the right track?"

Disagree "on the right track"

Irrelevant

Strongly disagree "on the right track"

Dull! Yawn!

Object, abstain

There was no useful information in it.

Presentations were silly to average

(P-5) Did you think the length of this Opinionnaire® has been - This is correlated with how people responded on the "CCF is on the right track?" question:

Strongly agree "on the right track"

Difficult to follow at times. Need more space for comments.

Got bored about 4 pages ago

Some questions need better wording

Very comprehensive

Agree "on the right track"

Obscure

Too many detailed questions; too few concerning principles.

Neutral "on the right track"

Too many questions that did not allow answers I wanted to give.

Strongly disagree "on the right track"

Biased in favor of urban

Disagree - let's look at government accountability thru "0" based budgeting and not raising taxes.

Object, abstain

They don't make it clear to a lot of folks

Far too long - poorly written.

Final comments: CCF/process-related - This is correlated with how people responded on the "CCF is on the right track?" question:

Strongly agree "on the right track"

Forums are good, but public meetings with county representatives should be used as well.

I object to the idea of taxing "the very wealthiest" only. The answer to T101-103 would be very different if this weren't the focus of the question. The forums are merely questionnaire-answering sessions and are not looking I think the county and its employees should not always worry about what they say to the public and how they say it. Talk to citizens not as children to be led but as adults and friends to seek our best advice. Challenge us to think outside the box. AND do things outside the box for the county to try new things - experiment with new social technologies (like twitter capture during traditional public meetings). Appel to our better nature in helping the greater community and allow us to lead sometimes too. Thanks.

No new taxes! This process should be privately funded. It loses all credibility when its run by the same organization it is trying to hold accountable (i.e. King County government)

Thanks for the effort, but this questionnaire was very biased and constructed to confuse those who fill it out, especially during the meeting.

These forums have provided great conversations and idea sharing in a civil manner. This is a great way for the little guy to give their opinion. Keep them coming.

This opinionnaire better than last - I think you're getting better with more specific questions. Some questions (i.e. human services) hard to answer because I didn't know what city & state would do if KC did not provide those services. King County does not advertise well. With no budget, can't be done, but some of us don't really know what is done. King County's mission is on the website but I'd like to see it with the forums materials. I'd like to know the mission of the state and cities. I don't know where there is overlap of services.

Video was fair and even-handed but many of the questions were biased. There should have been some questions on KC Elections. There should have been a question about whether the survey/questions were biased, or not.

Agree "on the right track"

A handout with an overview on this topic would have been very helpful. Please post handout before the meeting. Do this opinionnaire online and leave more time for discussion

I appreciate the fact that the video was (apparently) cheaper to produce. Cost savings in these times are wiser. More quantitative info would have been helpful, though. Just a few charts would have put some of the budget questions in perspective. Thanks, though, for all the hard work!

Instead of the DVD, send us the written information in advance of the forum -- and give us real information rather than platitudes.

Questions 101-103 need to consider income tax on all individuals along with reduction of sales tax. Probably the most important question on this opinionnaire.

Use percentage rather than dollar amounts in video.

Neutral "on the right track"

Object to T19-T45. This implies rating them against each other.

Questions are too vague and could have used more granularity. It would have been helpful to know the topic ahead of timeso I could have done more info to better answer these questions. Additional handouts containing some supporting info materials and documentation about the topic would have been great.

The premice of most of the questions was increase taxes to sustain services. King County government should look at why the cost of services are so high and also are some programs really necessary. The tough questions and issues are again ducked by our elected officials. They probably will not address the union contracts issue becasue the unions use their PAC money to threaten the elected officials

The questions on this survey are not consistent and phrased to benefit the party collecting the survey. The main priority is not to increase taxes in any form and to reduce unnecessary spending.

The video showed bias because each politician expressed concern about finding new income sources, not improving efficiency wihin government

Disagree "on the right track"

Some questions seem to be elitist and biased for privileged, as the Kirkland rep. was as well.

Tries to cover too much with too little info.

What is an "end anchor" question? This is technical jargon and not explained. Use lay terms. - #80-82: what are other programs"? Do you mean other Human Services programs or toehr KC programs generally - Have you represented the various programs of King County in terms of where most of the \$ are spent or in terms of what has the strongest emotional appeal? The first is accurate, the second misleading. -The questions do not seem to me to be written in a manner tha elicits clear understnading , unambiguous results or scientific validity. - The survey questions seem to be oriented to a very specific agenda of programs to cut and how to increase revenues. -Govt inherently has little fiscal discipline; while an income tax would be a fairer taxation method, the govt cannot be trusted to be disciplined w/ such a charge. We would quickly become like CA=overtaxed.

Strongly disagree "on the right track"

Questions are all biases and the available choices force answers that are being promoted by the current county agenda. The unincorporated King Counyt contains many, many people and families who would like to express their views. A bias and manipulative survey like this is the epitome of a "push poll" where the bias design forces liberal answers by not offereing a balance set of answers that would allow independent thinkers to answer

This topic was too vague and many questions made assumptions that there were no programs to cut only whether we should be taxed more to support these programs.

You are all more deranged than I am!

Object, abstain

This is a great idea, but there just is not any information to make informed decisions about how to answer these questinos. You need to see line item budgets along with rationale for expenditures. There was really high frustration among the attendees. People like and believe in these forums but when they get to them the topic is so broad and there are no materials with specific facts about the topic to support the discussion. The video was Good discussion but poor survey questions. It should be more straight forward yes or no, agree or disagree, not abstain or object.

I'm not sure how seriously the recipients "elected officials" take the information.

Your answers will not be accurate - every survey starts with 1- disagree to 5- most agree. Good luck!

Final comments: policy related - - This is correlated with how people responded on the "CCF is on the right

Strongly agree "on the right track"

Assumption that the county govt exists solely to provide services... didn't allow for policy discussion
County ought to reevaluate operational costs, salaries/benefits before taxing more. Also stop taxing good tax paying folks; be harder on the "bad guys" even if they are white collar. You keep taxing, you keep digging a deeper hole; look at California.

DDES Building Permit should be \$1,000 max for residence under 3500 SF.

I am upset that the county government can tell me & others how to use my land and restrict usage when developers can over populate other "critical" areas that truly do impact our region's stormwater runoffs, flooding, landslides, etc. I also am VERY UPSET that the county continues to ignore its own lands when it comes to roads when it suits them. The RCW states that all roads are used by 15 + family must be paved and maintained. We live on a road with 22+ owners & we still can't get our road paved. We have to deal with speeding log trucks, overgrowth of vegetation & potholes that could eat an elephant (which increases our costs).

I find it appalling that there has never been a long-term plan for King County. I do commend you for initiating this but it's too little too soon. 5 years is not long-term. Problem: lack of vision in the last 30 years - that's why transportation is such a mess. State tax: no mention was made regarding initiating a state tax - make it same % for all) and cutting the onerous property tax - lessen B&O taxes for small business! Stop hiring employees - how many in last 10 yrs have been hired? Government employees should not have a union. They also have benefits that far exceed mine and most others who don't work for a large company. Question all programs & people
I think the business & occupation tax (B&O) is an unfair tax to new and small businesses and should be replaced by a flat rate state income tax on the federal income tax.

I think the county and its employees should not always worry about what they say to the public and how they say it. Talk to citizens not as children to be led but as adults and friends to seek our best advice. Challenge us to think outside the box. AND do things outside the box for the county to try new things - experiment with new social technologies (like twitter capture during traditional public meetings). Appeal to our better nature in helping the greater community and allow us to lead sometimes too. Thanks.

I think the county should be proactive in communicating about existing private / state / federal programs which duplicate their services. I also think that the county should encourage and facilitate volunteerism in non-essential services, such as: - counseling, animal care, child education & development, addiction programs, recidivism

I would like to see monthly budgets and pertinent follow up. Just like I do with my checkbook and expenses. Too much is spent one month, then you would know to curb back before it goes out of hand.

In addition to budget issues, the county should look at its own functioning. I am in favor of real audits determining if programs are really performing efficiently and effectively. Are the programs accomplishing their objectives. Do they really have value?

King County has failed to live up to its agreement on the cleaning of May Valley ditch as agreed to by the water
King County needs to be forward looking: 1) planning for lower revenues long term; 2) making processes more efficient; 3) strict timelines for processes; 4) encourage business geared to future needs such as alternative
Look for creative solutions - experiment with variables, e.g. cost of bus ride vs ridership // govnt workers reduced hours; light sentences for victimless crimes; sentences of public service instead of jail when criminal is not a threat to society; gas tax vs sales tax.

Often savings and improvements can come from within existing programs and services. Not only should direct cuts be made to balance the budget, but every department should be requested to demonstrate continuous improvement in savings while maintaining high services levels. This can be done and is done in private business
Rural representation, rural economics, rural strategy, community councils.

Many of the questions were poorly written. You never asked what areas I would cut in 94-98 before I might approve raising taxes. Cut all unessential services first. Lower # of county employees. Priorities: 1) Safety; 2) Elections; 3) Transportation; 4) Health. Video was less informative and less interesting than in Round 2.

No new taxes! This process should be privately funded. It loses all credibility when it's run by the same organization it is trying to hold accountable (i.e. King County government)

Agree "on the right track"

Elder abuse and abuse of vulnerable populations is occurring in King County through the filing of fraudulent guardianship petitions by corrupt and unscrupulous lawyers. This is a sophisticated form of elder financial abuse in that these petitions are used by lawyers as weapons to advance their own ulterior motives like forcing settlements in insurance disputes. When victims appeal to the police, they act like they don't give a damn and claim "this is a civil matter". It is not, it is in fact a criminal matter involving fraud and perjury. The police, and Adult Protective Services need to be trained and willing to investigate these sophisticated cases of elder financial abuse. The King County legal and judicial system is riddled with guardianship corruption and financial bias, and incompetence in this regard. Further, the judges don't give a damn, just like the police.

Households have to learn to live within a budget. KC must do the same. DDES is excessive in every way. Trim the fat. Roads are bad. Taxes too high.

I believe additional sources of revenue can be obtained by creating access to documents, buildings, bus shelters, etc. to corporate ads. Another source would be to offer items with King County Logo items, such as t-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs to county employees. *Suggestions: Waste Management: "we are helping the environment by recycling"; permit office: "Building a safer tomorrow". Metro: "We save you time and money". Allow public employees to wear county logo items to work once a week.

The KC Council should examine the labor Union Agreement Policies & change the amount the employees pay for medical insurance to be consistent with industry. Change the contracts as they get re-negotiated over the 3 years rolling time period. KC Metro needs to cut the labor costs - reduce the bus hours and number of drivers to make up the \$100 M. BUT first, RAISE BUS FARES MORE. PRODUCE THE ACTUAL STUDIES that show reduced ridership with increased fares. We are talking about a \$7.00 round trip toll on SR 520. What's wrong with a \$2.00 bus far

We need to cut spending and county needs to live within its means based on the current tax revenues.

We need to understand & appreciate the interconnectedness of govt provided services e.g. transportation is related to a healthy economy, mental health & public health are related to public safety, environmental protection is related to public health, etc. This interconnectedness must be addressed at a strategic planning level to better prioritize services as well as the revenue streams that fund them. I don't see this happening. What may be even worse is that the public doesn't necessarily understand this & therefore provides conflicting

Neutral "on the right track"

1) cut discretionary commissions; 2) Keep the savings fund out of equities & mortgage-backed securities & in short term US treasuries; 3) cut all necessary programs equally & cut all salaries 5-10%, whatever is needed; 4) Prioritize services to King Co. residents & US citizens. Ask corporations and charities to step in for human services; 5) No more EPA & environmental restrictions - we have enough already; 6) Don't accept state and federal funds that have strings; 7) reduce misdemeanor or charges by sheriffs for domestic violence & drug offenses - don't automatically put people in jail for shoving or for being in the car with someone with marijuana.

If our society is to be sustainable in the near future, our gov't must stop implementing legislation that lures additional thousands of illegal & legal immigrants to this area and then putting cost burden on the middle class. KC gov't has been a giant pain in the neck for last 30 years, just like having to express myself in this silly 2" wide column. DDES charges way too much and is way too slow; development and project suffer. Our roads have numerous holes & ruts. Property taxes are sky high - what do we get in return? KC bureaucracy is too big, too many people being paid for doing zero. How many KC employees are paid over \$100,000 annually? KC is left wing. KC wants to have sister city status with cities in communist countries.

The premise of most of the questions was increase taxes to sustain services. King County government should look at why the cost of services are so high and also are some programs really necessary. The tough questions and issues are again ducked by our elected officials. They probably will not address the union contracts issue because the unions use their PAC money to threaten the elected officials

Object, abstain

I'm not sure how seriously the recipients "elected officials" take the information.